



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Newsletter for the Initiative
May 1, 2003

Introduction – Keeping In Touch

Scope of Newsletter

This newsletter presents news and information specific to the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative, the partnership that developed the *North American Waterbird Conservation Plan* (NAWCP). Please feel free to pass it along to any potentially interested parties.

Other Networks

Newsletters addressing bird conservation initiatives generally, as well as aquatic birds and wetlands, already exist. For example, the **All-Bird Bulletin** provides news and information associated with the various bird conservation programs and initiatives associated with the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. To subscribe, contact Roxanne Bogart, Roxanne_Bogart@fws.gov. Past issues of the All-Bird Bulletin are posted on the US NABCI Web Site at <http://www.nabci-us.org/news.html>]

The **NEWSLINK — A Compilation of Migratory Bird & Wetland News from Around the World** — contains information relevant to wetland and aquatic bird conservation worldwide, including grant opportunities, publications, and conferences. To subscribe, contact Heidi Luquer, luquer@vermontel.net. Past issues of NEWSLINK are posted at <http://aswm.org/wetlandsnewslink/index.html>]

Waterbirds Website

The Waterbird Conservation for the Americas website has a new look and a new easy-to-remember name. The website www.waterbirdconservation.org serves as the on-line presence for the initiative. The older aliases (www.nacwcp.org and www.nawcp.org) will be discontinued over time. The website is structured to allow expansion with new information and links – but is definitely a work in progress. Your feedback and assistance are welcome!

Waterbird Listserv

The listserv (automated email list) for the initiative also has a new name to reflect the progress of waterbird planning. Formerly known as “nawcpadvisorycommittee,” the listserv is now “WaterbirdsNetwork.” This list is open to any interested parties and is generally for announcements warranting immediate distribution. New members (those not previously on “nawcpadvisorycommittee”) can join by visiting www.waterbirdconservation.org or by sending a blank email to Join-WaterbirdsNetwork@rana.er.usgs.gov.

Continental Activities

Waterbird Conservation Council Formed

A body of individuals representing the many interests and perspectives relating to waterbird conservation has been assembled to guide the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative. The council members were nominated by members of the original Plan Steering Committee, which disbanded following publication of the *North American Waterbird Conservation Plan*. This group will meet for the first time on June 4 and 5, 2003 in Reston, Virginia, at which time they will decide on a Chair, committees, terms of reference, and additional members.

Ghisselle Alvarado Quesada, National Museum of Costa Rica
George Archibald, International Crane Foundation
Paul Baicich, American Birding Association
Stephen Brown, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences
Vernon Byrd, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jack Capp, USDA Forest Service
Eric Carey, Bahamas National Trust
Mauricio Cervantes Abrego, Consejo Internacional para la Preservacion de las Aves en Mexico
Francesca Cuthbert, University of Minnesota
Ian Davidson, BirdLife International
Naomi Edelson, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Beth Flint, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Rebecca Frank, Association of Joint Venture Management Boards
Frank Gill, National Audubon Society
Craig Harrison, Hunton and Williams LLP
Megan Hill, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
William Howard, Wildlife Habitat Council
James Kushlan, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
Judith McIntyre, North American Loon Fund
Gerry McKeating, Bird Studies Canada
Eric Mellink, Centro de Investigacion Cientifica y de Education Superior de Ensenada
Lourdes Mugica Valdes, University of Havana
Kathy Parsons, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences
Pat Patterson, The Nature Conservancy
Don Paul, Intermountain West Joint Venture
Paul Schmidt, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Elizabeth Schreiber, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
Melanie Steinkamp, Wetlands International
Adrienne Tossas, Puerto Rican Ornithological Society
Gerald Winegrad, American Bird Conservancy
James Woehr
Kent Wohl, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Scott Yaich, Ducks Unlimited

Canada's Wings Over Water

Canada has prepared a national plan for the conservation of waterbirds entitled *Wings Over Water* (WOW), through a partnership of national, provincial and territorial wildlife agencies, environmental NGOs, and other specialists. Developed concurrently with the continental Plan, WOW will be available next month. To request a copy, contact the seabird/waterbird biologist in any Canadian Wildlife Service regional office or national coordinator Bob Milko (Bob.Milko@ec.gc.ca), or visit http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/birds/wb_om_e.cfm

Continental Plan Document In Print

The *North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, Version 1* was presented at the Pacific Seabird Group meeting in Parksville, British Columbia (February 19-21, 2003), signifying the last major "rollout" of the document. Hard copies of the plan are still available; order by writing waterbirds@fws.gov. To conserve paper, the document will NOT be posted electronically on the website until the printed supply is exhausted. Errata sheets will be posted as necessary, and electronic versions can be made available upon request.

Waterbird Monitoring Partnership

Structure

The Waterbird Monitoring Partnership is coordinated out of the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center as described at <http://www.mp2-pwrc.usgs.gov/cwb/> (also accessible through www.waterbirdconservation.org.) With the departure of Melanie Steinkamp to a new position with Wetlands International¹, the contact at Patuxent is Bruce Peterjohn (Bruce_Peterjohn@usgs.gov).

Work to format and upload datasets to the Waterbird Monitoring Database hosted at Patuxent is ongoing. Partners are encouraged to register and enter their own data as well as provide feedback on the utility of the database.

Colonial Census Manual Revised

The document *Breeding Season Population Census Techniques for Seabirds and Colonial Waterbirds Throughout North America* underwent recent revision in preparation for discussion at the Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) annual meeting. This February 2003 draft is available under "Publications" on www.waterbirdconservation.org. The discussion at PSG reviewed objectives, concepts, and recommendations. Invested parties must now decide how to proceed with this effort, perhaps via a student, contractor, or the delegation of various sections to experts.

Marshbird Monitoring Protocols

Inconspicuous marshbirds are difficult to detect and inhabit areas that are often not readily accessible. While some focused monitoring programs exist (e.g., the Marsh Monitoring Program in the Great Lakes Ecosystem; <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/mmpmain.html>), marshbirds generally have been poorly surveyed by traditional monitoring programs, and population assessment has required special development.

Multi-species marsh bird survey protocols have been developed over the past three years by Dr. Courtney J. Conway (USGS, Biological Resources Division, Arizona Coop. Fish & Wildlife Research Unit). For the most recent version of these protocols (dated December 2002) write cconway@Ag.arizona.edu. Approximately 50 sites (National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, other management areas) have indicated that they intend to use these protocols to survey marshbirds this year (2003). In 2002, 34 participants used these protocols.

Also released recently was a second draft (dated December 2002) of *A Unified Strategy for Monitoring Changes in the Terrestrial Birds of North American Tidal Marshes*, a follow-up to an October 2002 Workshop on Tidal Marsh Bird monitoring at USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. For a copy of this document, contact Sam_Droege@usgs.gov.

Funding News

¹ Melanie Steinkamp has taken a new position as North American Program Manager for Wetlands International. The USFWS Division of International Conservation in Arlington, VA has provided an office for this position: Melanie's contact information is 703-358-1953 and Melanie_Steinkamp@fws.gov (her email is hosted on a USFWS server, though she is not a USFWS employee). Melanie continues to take an active role in supporting the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative.

The Wildlife Management Institute hosted a workshop in Washington, D.C. on January 26 and 27, 2003 to explore urgent needs for bird conservation that could be addressed by U.S. federal funding. Each of the major bird initiatives presented their most pressing needs. Those presented for Waterbird Conservation for the Americas were:

- U.S. Capacity: National, Regional, Joint Venture, State
- Waterbird Monitoring Coordinator and Partnership
- Dedicated Communication and Outreach
- Habitat Restoration and Conservation Programs: National, Joint Venture, State, NGO
- International Support

At the conclusion of the workshop, the highest short-term priorities across all initiatives were identified as (1) science support for Federal agencies to support all the bird initiative needs; (2) increased funding for North American Wetlands Conservation Act; (3) increased funding and language changes for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act; (4) increased capacity for “all habitats” work in Joint Ventures; and (5) increases in State Wildlife Grants. The NGO subcommittee of the US NABCI Committee will continue discussions on funding these priorities.

Regional Activities

(Regional contacts' names are given in parentheses; Jennifer Wheeler can provide contact information, copies of most drafts, and additional details).

Northern Prairie and Parkland– Following several review phases, the NPP Region Waterbird Conservation Plan text and appendices are in a near-final form. Species accounts with distribution maps are being finalized. Pending review by the regional planning committee, the tentative schedule for “public release” of the plan is now April 2003. [Gerry Beyersbergen, Neal Niemuth]

Intermountain West– A second substantial draft of the Intermountain West Region Waterbird Conservation Plan is now available for review, and a second full regional planning meeting was held in Reno at the Nevada Division of Wildlife Office on January 28 and 29th, 2002. [Gary Ivey]

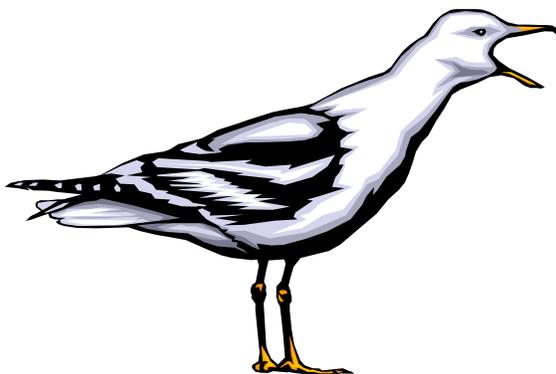
Pacific Coast– Planning is proceeding for BCR 32, BCR 5 and the California Current via a collection of efforts. Drafts exist for the portions in Canada: for seabirds, there is the “Pacific and Yukon Regional Seabird Conservation Plan” [Mark Hipfner, Doug Bertram, Ken Morgan] and other waterbirds are addressed in the “Waterbird Conservation Plan for British Columbia [Ken Morgan]. Underway is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Region (Region 1) Plan, which addresses marine and coastal species throughout the region, including open ocean. Primarily focusing on the role of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (but open to partner input), this document is due at the end of 2003 [Maura Naughton]. The California Current System Conservation Plan is a project of Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and concentrates on the needs of 18 pelagic species. This effort has included the compilation of biological foundation information to inform the USFWS Pacific Region Plan, but the primary goal of project will be filling data gaps relating to demography, climate trends, and prey depletion. A Northern CCS (Oregon, Washington, Canada) meeting is tentatively scheduled for September; a Southern CCS (California, Mexico) meeting will be held in the San Francisco Bay Area November 5-6, 2003 [Kyra Mills, Gregg Elliott]. Mexico’s Pacific Coast waterbird conservation planning will involve taking a site- or ecosystem-based approach, developing plans for protected areas that include elements of management, research and monitoring [Humberto Berlanga]. Finally, for Inland BCR 5, work is proceeding under a contract with Oregon Natural Heritage. [Tara Zimmerman, Eric Scheuering].

Southeast U.S. – An initial draft of the main body of the Southeastern U.S. Waterbird Conservation Plan, including population objectives based loosely on best guesses of existing populations of at least breeding species, has been developed. Several on-going “subregional” discussions are underway on surveys, to include clearly defining objectives and improving protocols to match up with objectives. (Contacts: Chuck Hunter, Walker Golder)

Mid-Atlantic/New England/Maritimes – The MANEM co-chairs have now met with all the local waterbird working groups in the region and have assembled the beginnings of our regional planning and implementation effort. Workshops focused on identifying the highest priority species, habitats, and research and conservation actions; the mid-Atlantic/Southern New England workshops also involved identifying actions that States could use for their State Wildlife Grants program, and other funding sources. Brief species accounts have been drafted and will be circulated to experts soon. The co-chairs will be working with individuals representing each of the local waterbird to pull together existing information and begin to assemble the regional plan. (Scott Johnson, Kathy Parsons)

Tidbits

Though created for managers of shorebird habitat, the new Shorebird Management listserv offers useful discussions on topics relevant to numerous aquatic bird species (e.g., beach renourishment, shallow wetland engineering specifications, conferences). This listserv is a cooperative effort of partners of the U.S. and Canadian Shorebird Conservation Plans and is maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; to subscribe, send a request to Brad_Andres@fws.gov



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